

# “Little Gems”

Five Year Anniversary Edition



Clerk of the Circuit Court - Gary M. Clemens  
Historic Records  
Volume V Issue 1 January 2020



"Little Gems" is a quarterly newsletter published by the Clerk of the Circuit Historic Records Division. "Little Gems" refers to a binder of interesting references compiled by retired Deputy Clerk, Louisa Hutchison. Since the formation of the county, the Clerks have squirreled away notes which listed things to remember, interesting facts, and things that were just down right oddities. Over time these notes went from scraps of paper tucked in desks or books, to an organized binder, now called the "Book of Little Gems." The Historic Records newsletter is meant to provide you information about upcoming programs and exhibits, updated indexes, processed records, tips for research, as well as some articles on a few of the "Little Gems" we have found.

## Land Records & Deed Research

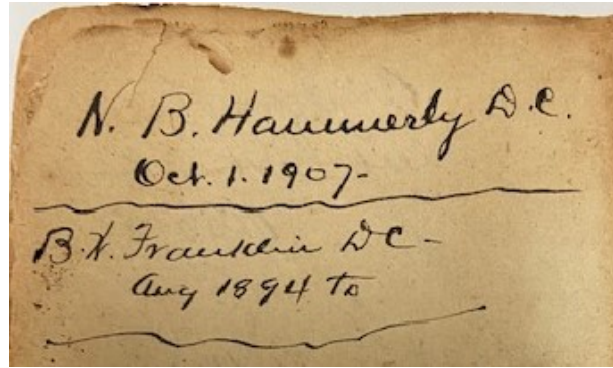
Loudoun is one of only a few counties in the Commonwealth that has records dating from its formation in 1757 when it split from Fairfax County. The Historic Records and Deed Research division includes court records from 1757-1980's and land records from 1757-present. Research can be conducted by using both in-house and online databases as well as paper indexes. Our staff can provide guidance and suggestions to start your research but **cannot provide research services or legal advice**. To prepare for your visit please review our online links to indexes and county databases which provide a starting point in your records research.

## If you Visit the Archives

There is a court order that establishes court security protocols that serve the best interests of all visitors to the various courts and court-related offices in the Courts Complex. Therefore, electronic mobile devices such as cellphones with cameras, laptop computers, and electronic tablets are currently not permitted in the Courts Complex. To assist patrons of the Historic Records/Archives research division, the Clerk's Office provides computer workstations with internet access so our patrons can review the websites of other historic records museums and historic records research organizations.

## Cover Page

Photo montage of projects and events in Historic Records and Deed Research since 2015. Photos include the replacement of 131 book binders for court order books to the long lines of visitors waiting to view Washington's will.



## "Little Gems"

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Special Collection  
Holy Bible 1806.

Image of N.B. Hammerly Deputy Clerk and B. Willard Franklin Clerk of Circuit Court names listed in back of bible. See "Little Gems" article for more details.

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## THE MANAGER'S ORDER BOOK: Welcome to the Winter Edition of "Little Gems"

By: Eric Larson



Five years ago, Historic Records published its first newsletter "Little Gems," and during this time "Little Gems" has continued to evolve. This is also the fifth anniversary of the Historic Records Division. In 2015 the Clerk's Archives Division duties were expanded and the division name changed to Historic Records and Deed Research. The most significant changes to the division were the addition of all land records, doubling of public and storage areas, and the Clerk's off-site records warehouse. Although the responsibility of Historic Records has expanded, it also gave the division another fulltime employee and additional resources.

The additional staff and space made it possible for Historic Records to expand its mission and to enhance our services to our citizens. Patrons now have increased access to court records, and more opportunities to explore the records at our programs and through our newsletter. Historic Records preservation efforts boosted in-house and contracted conservation, and furthered digitization of the records. Below you'll find my list of notable achievements in Historic Records since 2015.

Historic Records projects and programs are successful because our staff takes great pride in the work they perform daily. Our small staff has a combined total of over fifty years of experience preserving the clerk's historic court records. In this edition of "Little Gems," I've asked Historic Records staff to write a short article on their favorite project.

Historic Records also recognizes our patrons, visitors to our events, and the readers of "Little Gems." I consider the above supporters part of our public relation's team. This team has assisted by promoting Historic Records' programs through emails, articles, and especially word of mouth to the public, local leaders and schools.

The Honorable Gary M. Clemens, Clerk of Circuit Court, and his Historic Records staff looks forward to a new year of discovering more "Little Gems" in the court records, and providing greater opportunities for our citizens to view one of the most complete collection of court records in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

### Notable Department Achievements

#### Conservation

1776 Court Order Book  
In-house conservation of 50 Land Tax Books  
1757 Loudoun's First Court Order Book  
1782 Rough Minute Book  
131-New book binders for will, deed and index books

#### Scanning

All Deed and Will books 1757-present  
All Marriage Records from 1757-1925  
Land Tax Books 1989-2012

#### Indexing

Criminal Records 1757-1950  
Chancery Enslave Index 1757-1865  
Re-indexing of the Free Black and Enslaved papers  
Highway Plats 1940s-present

#### Programs

May 2019 First Friday display of George and Martha Washington's Will  
June 2017 First Friday Preservation Program  
2017 Black History Month Display  
"Little Gems" Newsletter  
Courtyard Walking Map

#### Famous Documents Found

President John Tyler Signature  
J. Edgar Hoover (FBI Director) Signature  
Senator Daniel Webster signature on a deed  
Various doodles by county clerks

#### Space Enhancements

Doubled the size of the public research space  
Increased the size of archival storage  
Increased security of the collection  
Fireproof Safe

## **"Little Gems": A picture is worth a thousand words.**

By: Sarah Markel

The picture below is of a Bridal Shower for Charlotte Lake May 18, 1954. We had this picture enlarged and have it prominently hanging behind the front counter.

There are many things to look at in this picture that give us a snap shot of not only the people who worked for the Clerk's Office but also how the records were stored. The room that is shown is no longer in existence as it was absorbed into the academy building renovations. This room used by the Clerk for the storage of records was attached to the back of the academy building. As you walk down the main corridor of the current Court House you can stop and look out the windows and see the ghost marks of the roof line and location of the original walls before they were absorbed into the Academy building.

The drawers you see at the top of the picture were used to hold the original documents such as wills and deeds. Former Archives Manager John Fishback, now part time volunteer, has been indexing and flat filing the Wills for approximately 20 years. This project is a huge undertaking and will take several more years to complete. Current Archives Manager Eric Larson is now flat filing and indexing the Deeds. Again this project will take years, but both projects will allow the records to be maintained for years to come. As the drawers are emptied they are put on display in the Historic Records main room.

The deed books and racks you see in the back of the picture are still in use today. You can visit Historic Records and view the original deeds/wills and original books. Sadly the light fixture in this picture has been lost to the ages.

The people in this picture represent almost all departments in the county at the time. You have Mr. Martz on far left. Mr. Martz was Clerk of the Circuit Court from 1951-1979. Beside him is Mr. Reed Galleher, Treasurer and then Mr. C. Frank Reed Deputy Sheriff/Jailor. To the far right you see Ms. Nellie B. Hammerly Deputy Clerk. Ms. Hammerly's dates of employment are not known, but she is found listed in loose papers and a bible that was used to swear in Clerk's and Deputy Clerks as early as 1907.



Not only did Ms. Hammerly have a long career with the Clerk's Office she was also the first known female Deputy Clerk. Ms. Hammerly paved the way for dozens of female Deputy Clerks working in the Court House today.

There are so many people in this picture with very interesting stories to tell. I hope that you will stop by archives and discover some of these stories for yourself.

Bonus points if you can spot Ms. Louisa Skinner Hutchison for whom "Little Gems" is named!



## My Favorite thing...

By: Alyssa Fisher

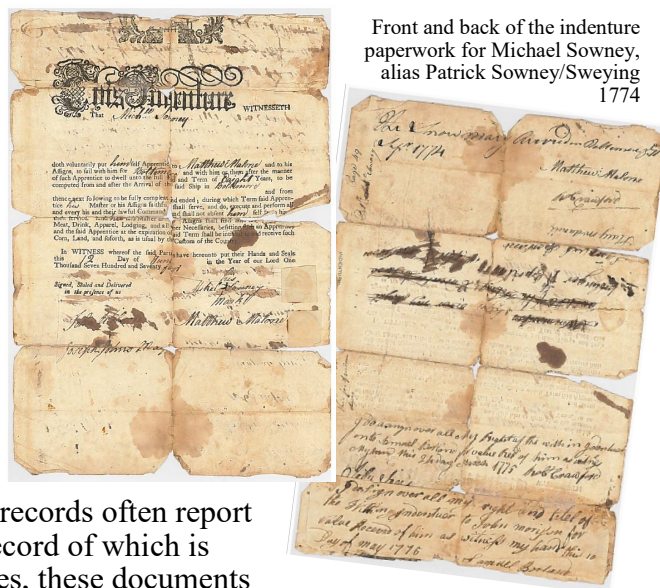
While I have had the opportunity to review and analyze a variety of records contained in the Clerk's Office collection, one of my favorite sets of records is the Bound Out Children and Indentures. My project involved reviewing the existing index, making corrections, and adding any new documents found over the years of flat filing unprocessed bundles. Through this process, I have found stories of interesting individuals that has not only inspired me to research into their lives, but also encouraged my interest in researching the laws and practices of indentures and binding agreements.

The Bound Out Children and Indentures Collection provides more than the names of individuals indentured and the time frame in which they lived. These records often report children's names, birth dates, and the names of parents, record of which is often non-existent in any other court records. In some cases, these documents show a parent who became a widow or widower who could not take care of the child, and found an individual or a family who could take the child in, provide for them, and teach them a useful trade or skill. In other cases, the overseers of the poor bound the child out to learn a trade so they would not become a burden to society and could potentially make it in life on their own once they became an adult.

Indentures occasionally provide the progression of an indentured servant's term of service. These records can begin with the indentured servant's first indenture to a sea captain who provided passage to the servant from places like Ireland and England to America. From the captain, they sometimes transferred to a company in a port city like Philadelphia or Annapolis. From there, a well-heeled individual acquired the indenture, only to transfer the indenture to a citizen of Loudoun where the indentured servant's term of service concluded. The records also indicate the laws surrounding a servant's term of service, and any consequences that may have ensued if a servant ran away, or if they had a child while in servitude. Indentured servants did not come from the highest levels of society, often died without any specific property that would be recorded in a will or a deed and would otherwise be lost to history if their indenture paperwork did not survive the ravages of time.

The documents in this collection have also shed light on fairly influential people in Virginia's history. One of the most interesting and perhaps significant finds in the Bound Out Children and Indentures Collection is the indenture of Kitty from 1778. This indenture of a young free black child included the signature of Robert Pleasants, a Quaker and early abolitionist who, in his lifetime, established the Virginia Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and won a lawsuit against his own family that led to the eventual emancipation of over 400 enslaved people. I had the privilege to research and write an article regarding this indenture and Robert Pleasants which can be found in Volume IV, Issue 2 of "Little Gems."

In effect, these historic records of children and indentured servants provide insight into the lives of people most often forgotten in American history. Such documents can explain societal expectations and the different roles held by men and women. They indicate social opinions about certain races and classes of people and provide evidence of trade routes, in terms of where servants came from, or places they ran to when trying to escape. Lists of tradesmen and different kinds of work people did in Loudoun can be extracted from these documents. The value of the records in this collection continues. My work has not yet concluded with this collection as I attempt to broaden the index to include court order book references. In the meantime, I continue to analyze and research aspects of this collection to broaden my understanding of the system, and to learn more about the many types of people who called Loudoun their home.



Front and back of the indenture paperwork for Michael Sowney, alias Patrick Sowney/Sweyng 1774

## Who could pick just one?...

By: Sarah Markel

When asked "What event or project stands out in your mind over the past 5 years?" I was unable to pick just one. While most of my day is administrative in nature I have had the opportunity to research some fascinating places and people.

I have written before about the work I did on completing the flat filing and indexing of the Loudoun County Criminal Records. This project was fun, but there were a few things I found that were very surprising. In order to process the papers and flat file them, I had to open the tri-folded records, mend them, and then put them in an acid free folder. One day I opened up a pack of papers and several bullets fell out. We called the deputies who verified they were spent shells and safe. As I read through the packet I found that these were the bullets that were recovered from the victims in the Clatterbuck/Love murder. It was strange to see that this evidence had survived as it is often destroyed after a certain amount of time by statute. But as these were small and folded up in the court documents this piece of history survived. Along these same lines, I also found a small pen knife in one of the packets that had been used in an attempted murder.

Working in Historic Records has allowed me to work with not only records, but also customers/researchers. In working with customers I have been able to hear about family adventures and even a wayward cousin or two. After years of researching I was sad that as a transplant to Loudoun County I would not be able to find out any of my own family history in our extensive collection. Then one day while working on the Criminal Records I was shocked to see that my great-grandfather Marion Ring had signed as a probation officer, to pick up a young man that ran away, and transport him back to Shenandoah County! This all just goes to prove you never know what you will find!!

My favorite part of my job is interacting with the public. I am always excited when we get to take a junket. Over the past few years we have been able to take the "archives show" on the road. Twice we partnered with Lori Kimball at Oatlands Historic House & Gardens. Alyssa, Eric, and I were able to attend the Oatlands descendants weekend event. What a great day we had listening to family stories and showing attendees what items we had in our collections and how we can assist them in researching.

We were also asked by our friends at The Thomas Balch Library to design a display for a month to be shown in their main lobby. This was a great way to show the public, who may know that the Clerk's Office has genealogy records, a glimpse of what we have in our collection.

We often partner with the Fairfax County Clerk of the Circuit Court Archives Division. We have been able to go to events in Fairfax County and set up a table to show residents what records we have in our collection. These events are always fun! It is through this partnership that we were able to arrange George Washington's Will to visit Loudoun County for a First Friday Event.

Archives Division has also partnered with several schools to provide copies of primary resources for teachers. In addition we also work with students who are researching different topics for class. As a former teacher it is always fun to see students work through the research process and see how proud they are when they finish their projects.

In conducting outreach efforts to our citizens and those in surrounding counties we have seen an uptick in visitors searching for their family records, and people just looking to find fun stories about Loudoun County. As we still have records we are processing, who knows what the next big discovery will be?

Right: First Friday, Old Court House, Washington's Will







Left: Sarah & Alyssa at Oatlands 2015.

Note: Eric caught himself in the mirror taking the picture.



Left: Archives Manager Mr. Eric Larson and Chief Deputy Mr. Kevin Blatchley get ready for a First Friday Open House. 2017

Below: Volunteer & Former Manager of Archives, John Fishback, sure seems happy about new binder cover day 2016!





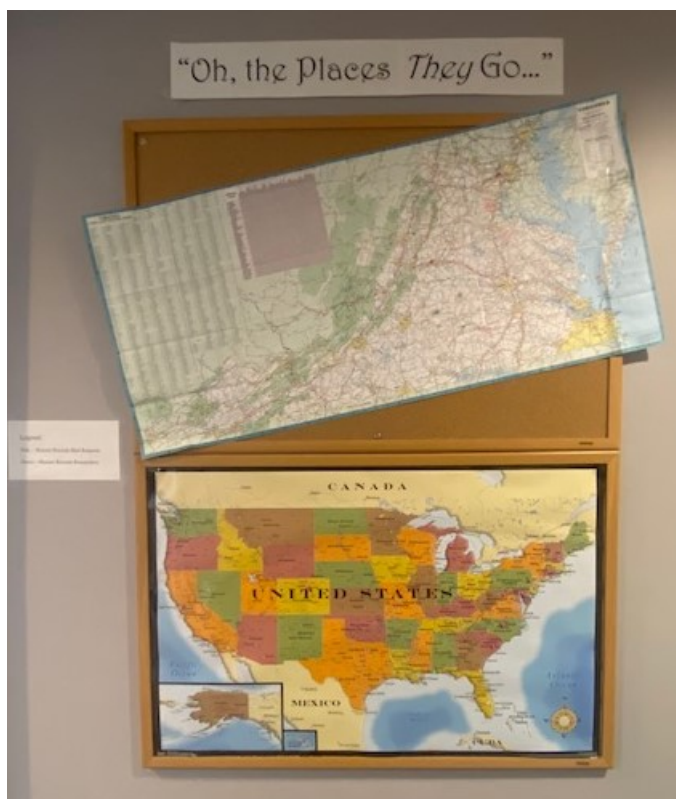
Alyssa laughs with a visitor during a First Friday event in 2016



Left: To the left you see a picture of a water disaster preparedness plan. Archives employees train for how to respond to many different disaster scenarios, but always hope that these measures are never needed.

Right: Archives staff have designed many new brochures and handouts to assist our customers. On the right you see a box of walking maps of the Court House grounds. This box is placed out at the Leesburg Garden Show each year for visitors to learn more about the Court House grounds and monuments.





### “Who is using our records for research?”

In response to this question we decided to track where our historic records requests are coming from. For each historic record copy request we receive we place a pink pin in our Virginia and our United States Maps. Since November 2019 we have been surprised how many request we have received.

So far we have sent copies of historic records to 21 states. Including Alaska and Hawaii!

With the start of the Real ID we have been seeing an increase in Marriage License request.

It is very interesting to see what states people who were married in Loudoun move to.

With the ease of moving now, it will be more important than ever to be able to use technology to research family genealogy.

As always we remind researchers to do their homework. If you read online about a person you are researching please contact the local records keeper to verify!





R	Y	E	V	R	U	S	E	T	A	T	S	E	N	H	M
E	Z	R	C	B	O	O	T	V	R	O	L	U	N	J	Q
S	R	I	O	P	L	L	I	W	V	U	A	R	K	U	N
N	E	C	N	O	I	T	C	E	L	L	O	C	U	D	O
E	S	F	S	L	S	A	O	U	Q	B	G	C	L	G	I
C	E	I	E	S	Y	H	C	R	E	P	X	O	R	M	T
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A	E	E	P	S	P	E	E	D	I	N	G	K	J	N	Y
M	S	U	R	K	O	O	B	X	A	T	D	N	A	L	A

**Can you find these words in the puzzle above?**

ANNIVERSARY	DEED	JUDGMENT	POLES
BASE BORN	EMANCIPATION	LAND TAX BOOK	RESEARCH
CASE	ESTATE	MARRIAGE LICENSE	ROAD
CHANCERY	FIDUCIARY	MILITIA	SPEEDING
COLLECTION	GOAL	ORDER	SURVEY
CONSERVATION	GRANT	ORDINARY	WILL
COURT	INDENTURE	PERCH	
CRIMINAL	INDEX	PLAT	

## 2020 PROGRAMS

### Farming in Sterling, The Edds, Ewing, and Nokes Family

February 15, 2020 Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum, 1-3PM

Before Countryside, Cascades, and the Dulles Town Center, there were African American-owned farms in the Sterling area. The Edds dairy farm, called Pidgeon Hill, eventually became the community of Countryside. The Ewing farm is now incorporated into Cascades. Most of the Nokes property is now the Dulles Town Center shopping mall.

### First Friday May 1, 2020 Courthouse and Grounds: 263 Years of Loudoun's Court Complex

The upcoming expansion is just one of many additions to the courthouse complex in the last 263 years. Historic Records will exhibit court documents and artifacts exploring the history of the courthouse and grounds from 1757-present. **This event has been postponed**

### Clerk's Office Tour of Historic Records

Date: May 19, 2020 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Location: Thomas Balch Library

208 W Market St Leesburg, Virginia 20176

Eric S. Larson, Historic Records Manager for the Clerk of the Circuit Court, will lead a tour of the Clerk's Office. He will discuss the extent of Loudoun County's records holdings, where to look for records of births, deaths, marriages, and deeds, and how to use these records in research. Attendees will need to pass through court security so the group will leave the library promptly at 1:45PM. Please contact the Thomas Balch Library to sign up for the tour. **This event has been postponed**

### First Friday June 5, 2020: An Evening on the Courthouse Grounds

Come join Historic Records' staff to tour the 1894 courthouse and historic grounds. Stations will be setup in the courthouse and grounds for visitors to learn about the history of Loudoun's three courthouses, memorials, events, markets and famous people to Loudoun's court complex since 1757.

### September 2020 (Date-TBD) 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of WWII.

This is a partnership with the Loudoun's WWII Committee for an exhibition on Loudoun's contribution to the war effort. Details to follow in future editions.

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## By the Numbers

### Budget Year Stats from July 1, 2015-January 1, 2020

Budget Year*	Patrons	Email	Mail	Phone	Archive Files Pulled	In House Copies	Sent Copies	Total Copies	Vol Hrs	Scans
2016	4256	841	1292	4180	1373	22197	6107	28368	840.5	23658
2017	4196	1268	1462	4581	804	22702	7191	30022	833	16876
2018	4307	1814	1250	3634	565	26604	5047	31651	526	28472
2019	4249	1831	1244	3177	558	26002	5171	31116	560.5	30047
2020*	1680	847	619	1529	120	8876	1683	18972	226	18927
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18688</b>	<b>6601</b>	<b>5867</b>	<b>17101</b>	<b>3420</b>	<b>106381</b>	<b>25199</b>	<b>140129</b>	<b>2986</b>	<b>117980</b>

\*County Budget Year Runs from July 1-June 30.

For example BY2016 started on July 1, 2015